

REMARKS

At the time of the last official Office Action, claims 1, 2 and 4-6 were pending in the application. Of those claims, claims 1 and 6 were independent claims.

In the last Office Action, the Examiner finally rejected all of the claims in the application as being obvious under 35 U.S.C §103 over SCHULZ (DE 199 12 149) in view of the publication of Pulp and Paper Canada - - COUNTER.

Applicant wishes to thank Examiner Peter Chin for the courteous and productive interview with applicant's undersigned counsel at the Patent and Trademark Office on February 18, 2004.

During the interview, applicant's counsel pointed out that the purpose of the present invention is a decorative paper that is inexpensive, is of high opacity and of reduced  $\text{TiO}_2$  content. This is achieved with the substitution of some of the relatively expensive  $\text{TiO}_2$  with 0.1 - 25 wt% talc having a particle size distribution D50 of less than  $2.0\mu\text{m}$ . As shown by the examples and the comparative examples and the table on page 10 of the application, in the Examples B1-B4 of the invention in which the aforementioned talc has been substituted for varying portions of the  $\text{TiO}_2$ , the opacity (%) is on the order of 92%. Also, as shown in the table the opacity (%) of Comparative Example V1 in which no talc has been substituted for the  $\text{TiO}_2$  is also on the order of 92%, whereas the opacity (%) of Comparative Example V2 in which talc has been substituted but having a size distribution in excess of 2.0 has dropped to 90%.

Also as discussed during the interview, SCHULZ discloses a decorative paper having a filler which may comprise  $\text{TiO}_2$ , talc and various other pigments or mixtures thereof. However, SCHULTZ is silent as to the percentages of these pigments, as well as the size distribution of the particles.

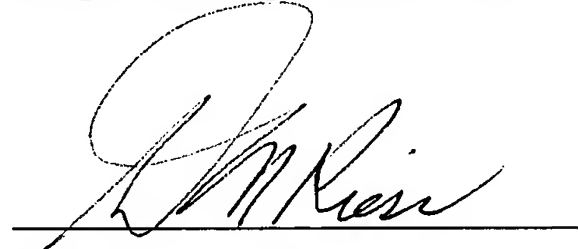
COUNTER discloses that talc may be substituted in a 20/80 pigment mixture of  $\text{TiO}_2$ /clay. However, unlike the pigment mixture in SCHULZ or the present invention which is used as a filler in the paper itself, the pigment mixture in COUNTER is employed as a coating on the paper.

One skilled in the art would not be able to conclude that the use of a talc pigment in the  $\text{TiO}_2$ /clay pigment mixture as employed in a coating as in COUNTER would perform the same if it was employed as a filler as in SCHULZ. This is because the degree of reflectivity when the pigments are employed as a coating on the paper is quite different than where the pigment mixture is in the paper itself as a filler. This unpredictability is further exacerbated by the fact that in decorative papers as in SCHULZ and the present invention, the final step is to impregnate the paper with a polymeric resin which further alters the opacity, and reflectivity of the paper.

It was agreed during the interview that if independent claims 1 and 6 were amended to set forth functional characteristics on the order shown in the comparative table on page 10, that the application would be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, claims 1 and 6 have been amended as set forth herein and as agreed during the interview so as to place the application into condition for allowance.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims remaining in the present application, claims 1, 2 and 4-6 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. M. Riess", is written over a horizontal line.

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